(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government of Assam has informed that they have initiated steps to address the issues raised by the Assam Tea Tribe Students Association (ATTSA) in a time bound manner. The State Government have also constituted a Committee for resolving these issues by discussions with the representatives of Assam Tea tribe Students Association (ATTSA).

Contract Employment System in Newspaper Industry

1711. SHRI JIBON ROY:
SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that newspaper barons are using contract employment system to deny newsmen their dues;

(b) whether Government would agree to abolish the contract system and regularise the services of news persons; and

(c) whether Government would also agree to bring a comprehensive amended working Journalists Act so as to ensure stoppage of unlimited period of working hours with meagre compensations?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) and (b) The employment system covering the newspaper establishments and the newsmen involves direct employer-employee relationship. The employment conditions, which also cater to hiring of personnels on contract basis, are determined through mutual negotiations.

(c) There is no such proposal under consideration.

Minimum Wages for Labourers

1712. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be piеased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 445 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 15th July, 2004 and state:

(a) whether Government have received complaints regarding non-payment of wages at Government's prescribed rates; and

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take to ensure the payment of minimum wages to the labourers?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) The Government at times receives complaints regarding non payment of minimum wages.

(b) The officers of both Central and State enforcement machineries are appointed as inspectors under the statutory provisions of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. They conduct regular inspections and advise the employers to make payment of short fall of wages whenever they come across any case of non payment or less payment of wages. They can invoke penal provisions prescribed under this Act. Both Central and State Governments try to strengthen and streamline their enforcement machineries for effective implementation of the Minimum Wages Act.

Indian Overseas Welfare Fund

1713. SHRI SUDARSHAN AKARAPU: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently set up a new "Indian Overseas Welfare Fund" for the welfare of overseas Indian workers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the total corpus and the objectives of the fund; and

(d) the total financial assistance extented to overseas workers as on the 31st March, 2004?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

Status and upgradation of ITIs in Uttaranchal

1714. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that several ITIs (Industrial Training Institutes) have been operating in different regions of Uttaranchal;